

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 NIC-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /118 W

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R 101642Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3107

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: BONN'S VIEW OF LOWER SAXONY

REF: HAMBURG'S 666 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: FROM THE BONN PERSPECTIVE THE ELECTION IN LOWER SAXONY (SEE HAMBURG'S 666) HAS BEEN OF GREAT INTEREST BUT THE RESULTS CANNOT BE USED AS A RELIABLE GUIDE TO THE FUTURE. THE SPD CAN CONTINUE ON THE COURSE IT HAS SET ITSELF WHILE THE CDU AND FDP AGAIN MULL OVER PROBLEMS THAT HAVE BESET THEM IN RECENT YEARS. END SUMMARY

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1. THOUGH THE FINAL FIGURES ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE

BECAUSE OF A COMPUTER BREAKDOWN IN HANNOVER, THE CDU AND THE FDP CAN LEGITIMATELY CLAIM SUCCESS WHILE THE OSTENSIBLE LOSER, THE SPD, TOO CAN CLAIM "SUCCESS" IN THAT IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO GOVERN IN LOWER SAXONY (THOUGH NOW WITH THE FDP) DESPITE THE PARTY'S LOW FORTUNES JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO AT THE TIME OF BRANDT'S RESIGNATION. ALSO, 3 SPD'S LOSSES ARE LESS THAN THOSE IN RECENT ELECTIONS AND THUS MAY PERHAPS LATER TURN OUT TO HAVE BEEN A SIGNIFICANT TURN UPWARD IN THE SPD'S FORTUNES.

2. BUT WHATEVER NATIONAL MEANING THE SPD'S NEW MANAGEMENT READS INTO THE ELECTION, THERE IS NO APPARENT NEED TO CHANGE DRASTICALLY THE POLICY AND TACTICS IT HAS SET ITSELF FROM NOW UNTIL THE NEXT FEDERAL ELECTION IN 1976.

3. FOR THE CDU AND THE FDP, HOWEVER, THE ELECTION DOES POSE PROBLEMS. FOR THE FDP IT IS THE OLD CURSE OF IDENTITY. IT DID EASILY SURMOUNT THE 5 PER CENT THRESHHOLD IT FAILED TO CROSS FOUR YEARS AGO, BUT ITS 7.1 PER CENT IS A FAR CRY FROM THE 8.5 PER CENT IT ACHIEVED IN LOWER SAXONY IN THE FEDERAL ELECTION OF 1972, AND ONCE AGAIN ITS GAINS FAILED TO MATCH SPD LOSSES THUS CONFIRMING AT THE VOTING BOOTH A TREND NOTED IN OPINION POLLS THAT THE FDP IS IDENTIFIED MORE AND MORE AS A TWIN OF THE SPD.

4. FOR THE CDU THERE IS, AGAIN, THE OLD CURSE OF LEADERSHIP. IT IS THE GENERAL VIEW AMONG POLITICIANS IN BONN THAT THE BEST PERFORMER BY FAR IN LOWER SAXONY WAS HELMUT SCHMIDT, WHILE ONE OF THE POOREST WAS HELMUT KOHL, CHAIRMAN OF THE CDU AND CURRENT BEST-BET TO BE THE CDU'S CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE IN 1976. THUS, WHILE THE CDU ALL BUT CARRIED THE DAY, THERE IS THE FEELING WITHIN THE PARTY THAT THE RECENT DISARRAY WITHIN THE SPD AND ITS LOW STANDING IN THE OPINION OF THE VOTERS

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WOULD HAVE LED TO A COMPLETE CDU VICTORY IN LOWER SAXONY IF THE PARTY'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WERE NOT SO INEFFECTIVE.

5. THE SOLUTION TO GENSCHER'S PROBLEM IS CLEAR: THE FDP MUST DEFINE ITSELF MORE CLEARLY AND THUS DISTANCE ITSELF FROM THE SPD. BUT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DO THAT AND AT THE SAME TIME KEEP THE COALITION WITH THE SPD EFFECTIVE. THE FACT THAT BRANDT WAS MORE POPULAR THAN THE SPD IN 1972 DID MUCH TO EXPLAIN FDP SUCCESSES THEN BECAUSE A VOTE FOR THE FDP WAS PRECISELY A VOTE FOR BRANDT WITHOUT SOCIALISM. BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT WILL PROBABLY NOT BE THE CASE WITH SCHMIDT IN 1976 AND THEREFORE THE FDP MAY BE FORCED TO MAKE SOME NOISES ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A COALITION WITH THE CDU IN ORDER ONCE MORE TO ESCAPE GOING UNDER AS IT ALMOST DID WHEN IT WAS CONSIDERED A PALE SHADOW OF THE CDU IN THE MID 60'S.

6. THE SOLUTION FOR THE CDU/CSU IS NOT CLEAR: IT HAS NO REALLY EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNER IN ITS NATIONAL LEADERSHIP--EXCEPT STRAUSS AND THEN ONLY IN BAVARIA.

IF IT HAD ONE HE COULD PROBABLY GET THE NOMINATION
ONLY BY PLAYING OFF THE COUNTER-FORCES WITHIN THE
PARTY SO THAT HE COULD NOT CAMPAIGN ON MUCH OF A
PLATFORM EXCEPT THE VAGUELY NEGATIVE ONE OF PROMISING
TO GOVERN BETTER THAN THE SPD. THUS, FOR THE CDU THE
QUESTION OF WHO IS STILL TIED TO THE QUESTION OF
WHITHER, AND AS LONG AS IT CAN ANSWER NEITHER IT
CANNOT EFFECTIVELY EXPLOIT THE INTRA-COALITION
STRESSES OR THE SPD'S OWN INNER PROBLEMS.
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